ISSN: 3079-3319

Falcons Journal of Advanced Research

Volume: 03, Issue: (01), Article ID: FJAR-VOL3-01-25003A

Exploring the Motivational Factors Influencing Prospective Teachers' Commitment to Teaching as a Career Choice

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Abstract

This study examined the motivational factors that influence prospective teachers' commitment to teaching as a career choice. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory, Expectancy–Value Theory, and Social Cognitive Career Theory, the study investigated the relative roles of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivations in shaping career commitment, as well as the mediating influence of teaching self-efficacy and professional identity. A mixed-methods approach was employed, based on survey data collected from 300 prospective teachers enrolled in a public university teacher education program in Pakistan, supplemented by qualitative interview evidence drawn from the same dataset. Descriptive results indicated that prospective teachers reported high levels of motivation across all dimensions; however, altruistic motives such as the desire to inspire students and contribute to society, along with intrinsic motives related to personal fulfillment and enjoyment of teaching, were more strongly endorsed than purely extrinsic considerations. Inferential analyses demonstrated that intrinsic and altruistic motivations were significant predictors of career commitment, whereas extrinsic motivations, including job security and economic benefits, showed limited explanatory power when internal motivations were considered. Mediation analyses further revealed that teaching self-efficacy and professional identity partially mediated the relationship between motivation and commitment, suggesting that internally motivated prospective teachers are more likely to develop confidence and a strong sense of themselves as future teachers, which in turn strengthens their intention to remain in the profession. The findings highlight the central role of internalized motivation in sustaining commitment to teaching and underscore the importance of teacher education programs that foster intrinsic interest, altruistic values, and professional identity formation. These results offer important implications for teacher recruitment, preparation, and retention strategies, particularly in contexts facing persistent challenges in maintaining a committed teaching workforce.

Keywords: *prospective teachers, teaching as a career, motivation, career commitment, intrinsic motivation, altruistic motivation, teacher education*

Received: ***September 27, 2025*** *Accepted:* ***December 18, 2025***

How to Cite this Paper: Gull, Z., Bibi, S., & Ahmed, M. (2025). Exploring the motivational factors influencing prospective teachers' commitment to teaching as a career choice. *Falcons Journal of Advanced Research, 3*(1), 25-37. https://doi.org/10.63287/690430

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is fundamental to the development of the individual as well as to the development of society. It is widely known to be a fundamental pillar for the development of personal growth, social mobility, and career trajectories (Zareen, 2024). Within this more general structure, however, the teaching profession features in a very important light because of its thirty-one-year events on the learners and communities. Teaching is a vocation that is often depicted as noble and socially valued but the decision to seek teaching as an occupation is motivated by complex considerations and not idealism alone. Prospective teachers are faced with some this as they struggle to balance their personal interests, values, and aspirations with social expectations and economic realities when deciding whether to enter and stay in the profession (Zareen, 2024).

Across a variety of education systems, the challenges of teacher recruitment and retention that have been plaguing many education systems have been looming increasingly large. High attrition rates and low levels of interest in teaching careers have left people questioning the stability of their workforce and the quality of the education that is being taught (Bardach, Klassen, & Perry, 2021). Bardach et al. (2021) stress that the importance of understanding teacher commitment and the underlying determinants to teacher commitment is well-documented, given the well-documented consequences of attrition regarding student learning and institutional continuity. These challenges are global in nature but are particularly acute in situations like that of Pakistan where rapid expansion in education, ongoing reforms in its education system, etc. have increased the demands on the teaching provision. In this regard Zareen (2024) describes the research in the context of factors affecting teacher recruitment, retention and professional development is particularly timely in the Pakistani situation especially.

Despite the practical importance of this issue, little empirical attention has focused on the specific motivations surrounding the career choices of prospective teachers and how they relate to long-term commitment among prospective teachers. Existing syntheses like the review by See, Munthe, Ross, Hitt and Soufi (2022) demonstrate who becomes a teacher and document various patterns of motivation in different contexts but provide little understanding of what motivational factors are the most powerful predictors of sustained commitment to the profession. This gap is consequential in as much as motivation is related to not only initial consciousness to teach but also persistence over time. Evidence from higher education research suggests that better academic motivation relates to greater clarity of career decidedness (Koyuncuoğlu, 2020), and on teacher development suggests that a well-formed professional identity relates to retention (Wang & Zhang 2021). Together, these findings draw on the central role of motivation and identity in shaping the degree of teaching career commitment, which serves to highlight the importance of context-specific analysis in this research.

In this research, motivation is the goals, interests, and values that determine individuals to select and retain a career. This includes intrinsic drivers, for example, enjoyment of teaching and personal fulfilment, as well as extrinsic drivers, such as salary, job security and social recognition. Career commitment can be defined as intentions and determination to persist in teaching overtime as shown by plans for long-term commitment and the willingness to persist in the face of professional challenges. Prior studies have indicated that the strength of motivational orientations is positively related to firmer career intentions (Koyuncuoğlu, 2020), suggesting that prospective teachers with a strong intrinsic and altruistic motivation may be expected to show a greater level of commitment.

The purpose of present study is to have an in-depth look into the motivational factors affecting the prospective teachers towards the commitment of teaching as career choice. By highlighting the relative salience between intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic motives and examining the link between these saliences toward indicators of commitment to the state, the study aims at informing policy as well as practice. Insights on these motivational drivers can help inform strategies of teacher education institutions and policy makers in at least averting misaligned recruitment strategies, training and support mechanisms that do fail to align with the values of and expectations from aspiring teachers, thus strengthening commitment and contributing to a more stable teaching force.

1.1 Research Questions and Hypotheses Development

Based on the theoretical framework and reviewed literature, the study is guided by the following research questions and hypothesis:

1) Which motivational factors (intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic) are most strongly endorsed by prospective teachers?
2) How do these motivational factors relate to prospective teachers' commitment to teaching as a career?

H_1: Intrinsic and altruistic motivations will show a stronger positive association with prospective teachers' career commitment than extrinsic motivation, with this relationship operating partly through teaching self-efficacy and professional identity.

This formulation is in line with Self-Determination Theory and Expectancy-Value Theory because they all focus on the role of internalized values in maintaining the persistence process, as well as Social Cognitive Career Theory, due to the emphasis on the mediating role of self-efficacy. Demographic variables are considered in the analysis as covariates to control background influences on motivation and commitment.

2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Multi-Dimensional Nature of Motivation

Motivation is multidimensional in nature, especially in educational contexts where people tend to have multiple reasons for pursuing various goals at the same time. Prospective teachers may have intrinsic interest in learning and teaching, extrinsic considerations, associated with the ideas of rewards or status, and altruistic aspirations to contribute to the development of others. These motivational dimensions often interact and co-exist instead of functioning separately. In the field of education, high school, and college, it is often distinguished that intrinsic motivation, which is driven by interest and enjoyment, and extrinsic motivation, which is driven by external incentives (Koyuncuoğlu, 2020). In the context of teaching, motivation can be envisioned in a similar way as a combination of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and altruistic motivation. The motivation that is inherent is associated with engagement in teaching for personal satisfaction, extrinsic motivation with engagement for material or social benefits, and altruistic motivation with a sense of service or moral responsibility toward learners and society. This multidimensional view is informed by research that is theoretically and empirically supported by work that shows that intrinsic motivation is generated from the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs, while extrinsic motivation relies on outer contingency (Vansteenkiste, Ryan, & Soenens, 2020). Altruistic motivation also captures the concept of teaching as a calling or meaningful social activity. Together, these motivational dimensions provide an overall framework into which to examine the influence of various forms of motives on the commitment of prospective teachers to the profession.

2.2 Intrinsic, Extrinsic, and Altruistic Motivation Constructs

Intrinsic motivation is focused on doing something because it is intrinsically motivating or inherently enjoyable or meaningful to an individual and is not dependent on any external rewards. In teaching, intrinsic drivers could be a real passion for a subject, or the pleasure of making learning take place or to grow a personal sense of learning by teaching. Intrinsically motivated other teachers see teaching as a means in itself; intrinsically motivated teachers are self-motivated teachers who are driven to teach for the sake of teaching. Extrinsic motivation - by contrast this is doing something to achieve external results. For prospective teachers, some of the extrinsic motives could be an opportunity to set a certain stable income, job security, social prestige, or other instrumental aspects provided by teaching career. An important subset is that of the altruistic motivation - the desire to benefit others. In the teaching profession altruistic motives might include wanting to make a difference in the lives of students or serve one's community. Indeed, Zareen (2024) found that different kinds of potential teachers demonstrated such altruistic reasons. For example, interviews revealed that *"a lot of prospective teachers are driven by a deep desire to make a difference in the lives of their learners"*. In contrast, extrinsic motives, such as salary or job stability were also cited: the thesis made the point that *"the desire for job security and stability is important for many prospective teachers"*. These quotes from the thesis show how the altruistic dimension and the extrinsic dimension were salient for participants.

2.3 Major Theoretical Perspectives

2.3.1 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985) is a well-established framework for thinking about motivation. SDT holds that there are three fundamental psychological needs that individuals have: autonomy, competence, and relatedness; the satisfaction of these needs is vital to motivation and psychological well-being. Vansteenkiste et al. (2020) stress that under conditions in which autonomy, competency, and related needs are satisfied, people will feel more intrinsic, self-determined motivation. In teaching, autonomy is related to feelings of control over one's teaching methods, competence is related to feelings of effectiveness in teaching and relatedness is related to feelings of being connected with students and colleagues. According to SDT, if aspiring teachers believe that the teaching career will be fulfilling of these needs, intrinsic motivation and commitment toward the career should be higher. Conversely, environments that frustrate these needs will be demotivating and lead to attrition. Thus, SDT posits a positive relationship between need-satisfaction (which is a manner of internal motivation) and career commitment.

2.3.2 Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT)

Expectancy-Value Theory-beliefs about success and task value Eccles, J. (1997). Motivation and Self. EVT assumes that people have the motivation to engage in activities that they expect to achieve and that they value. As career conditions, the expected future teacher will be more motivated and committed if he or she believes he or she can be a teacher (high expectancy) and if he or she values the role of teaching (high subjective value). As Zareen (2024) summarizes, EVT maintains that *"individuals are motivated to engage in activities that they expect to succeed in and that they value"* which in turn affect their career decisions and commitment." Thus, a postulant teacher who has self-assurance in his or her ability to teach and who perceives value in himself or herself being a teacher is more likely to pursue (and continue in) the profession. EVT therefore relates both intrinsic interests and extrinsic perceptions (e.g. value of stable career) to career choice, and postulates that these factors can jointly influence teaching commitment.

2.3.3 Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) is a theory that extends Bandura's social cognitive theory to the realm of career development. SCCT assumes the interactions of personal cognitive factors (particularly self-efficacy) and outcome expectations with environmental supports to affect career interests, choices, and retention. In SCCT the key features are an individual's belief in their capabilities (self-efficacy) - people who believe that they can master teaching tasks are more likely to set goals and to persevere in a teaching career. Environmental and social factors (e.g. role models, feedback) influence these cognitions and expectations. Liu et al. (2020) explain SCCT on the basis that environmental and behavioral factors affect personal cognitive factors indirectly while personal factors (such as self-efficacy) affect educational outcomes directly (e.g., student employability). Applied to teaching, SCCT implies that future teachers who have high self-efficacy, and Bangladesh high outcome expectation (in result of supportive contexts) will have high career commitment.

2.4 Linking Motivation to Commitment

These theoretical perspectives collectively provide the idea that motivational factors are likely to be translated into career commitment by means of identifiable psychological mechanisms. Self-Determination Theory suggests a theory that the more autonomous individuals are motivated (especially in the context of intrinsic motivation) the more rooted they become and the more likely they are to sustain their persistence because they are more committed if they anticipate that their needs for autonomy and competence will be met (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020). Expectancy-Value Theory similarly suggests that higher beliefs about success in teaching as well as higher valuing the teaching profession is linked to greater commitment. Social Cognitive Career Theory further goes on to specify that self-efficacy acts as a mediating role in this process in that the confidence within the individual's ability to effectively perform as a teacher will strengthen the association between motivation and commitment (Liu et al, 2020). Within this framework, intrinsic and altruistic motivations are expected to show particular and strong positive associations with prospective teachers' commitment; while extrinsic motives may also contribute, and to a lesser extent. In addition, the development of a professional teaching identity is likely to mediate these relationships.

FJAR Falcons Journal of Advanced Research
ISSN: 3079-3319
Volume: 3,
Issue:(01)
Nov 25 - Jan, 2026

Evidence suggests that a well-established teacher identity supports sustained engagement and retention in the profession (Wang & Zhang, 2021). Accordingly, when prospective teachers internalize the role of teacher as part of their self-conception, the influence of their motivational orientations on career commitment is expected to be amplified.

2.5 Proposed Analytical Framework

Drawing on the preceding theoretical discussion, a conceptual model is proposed in which prospective teachers' intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivations are linked to their commitment to teaching (see Figure 1).

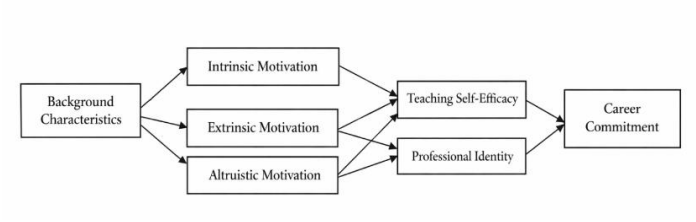

Figure 1: Conceptual framework linking motivational factors to prospective teachers' career commitment

Background characteristics, including prior educational experiences and demographic variables, may also shape motivational orientations or levels of commitment. Informed by Self-Determination Theory and Expectancy–Value Theory, intrinsic and altruistic motivations, reflecting a higher degree of value internalization, are expected to exert direct positive effects on commitment. Extrinsic motivations also may play a role, either directly or indirectly through influencing the value of teaching as a career option. Social Cognitive Career Theory goes on to mean that self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations act as key intermediate mechanisms in this process. Individuals with higher motivational orientations are likely to develop higher teaching self-efficacy and this in turn reinforces commitment to the profession. In addition, teacher professional identity is included as a mediating factor that reflects evidence that the internalization of the teacher role is an important factor in strengthening persistence and long-term engagement. Taking the framework, pathways from each motivational dimension to career commitment are stated as testable, through mediating cognitive, identity-related processes, and a systematic basis for consideration in the empirical check in subsequent sections.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Motivational Influences on Prospective Teachers

The existing empirical literature presents a broad, but scattered picture of the reasons why individuals go into teaching. Koyuncuoğlu (2020), who carried out the study on university students, found that higher academic motivation was the significant predictor of higher career decidedness, meaning motivation appeared to actively guide students toward making clear career choices and planning them. Applying this insight, it would be expected that prospective teachers who had more motivation to show more commitment. See et al. (2022) published a cross-national review paper titled "Who becomes a teacher and why?" and revealed that motivations differ from region to region but often include the altruistic, intrinsic, and pragmatic motivation. They point out, for example, that in some cultures the importance of service to children (altruistic motive) is given priority, whereas in others practical job features (e.g. working hours, job security) are influential. This therefore appears to indicate that there is more than one motive coexisting within prospective teacher populations.

Wang and Zhang (2021) directed their research on how professional identity formation is formed in preservice teachers: They found that strong identification with the teaching role is associated with motivation and retention. They point to the fact that if novices come to view teaching as a central part of who they are, they have greater job motivation. Although their study was in a Chinese context, it implies that professional values and identity important correlates of commitment in any context. Other studies underline related personal factors. Angelini (2023) reviewed the literature on teacher burnout systematically and found that some personal characteristics (e.g. high conscientiousness) were linked to lower burnout, that is, the retention difference is explained due to some psychological characteristics. In parallel, Nwoko et al. (2023) undertaken a systematic review of factors influencing the occupational wellbeing of teachers; they found that factors such as workload, autonomy, professional support, and school climate are major influences on teachers. While not directly related to the selection of career, these results raise the possibility that teaching environment (an extrinsic context) could impact teacher retention, and by extension, that prospective teachers aware of poor working conditions could be less committed.

Several empirical studies are directed directly at those who are in their degree work in prospective teaching. Julia, Subarjah, Maulana et al. (2020) surveyed new primary teachers and overviewed that most felt prepared to teach but some expressed concerns about their practical readiness which suggests that confidence (self-efficacy) is relevant to commitment. No study was found that directly correlates motivations with prospective teachers' commitment, but mutual relations can be related to. For example, Bayoumy and Alsayed (2021) found that for nursing students, a higher perceived learning engagement (a correlation of intrinsic motivation) was related to better academic performance. Translated to the world of teaching, one could therefore conclude that engaged, motivated teacher-aspirants will persevere better, therefore. Likewise, the study of Lu, Mamun, Chen, Yang, and Masukujjaman (2023) focused on "quiet quitting" during the Covid-19 era, and found that psychological empowerment was the key to the gradual maintenance of work engagement, therefore, by analogy, it is possible to support the motivation of prospective teachers who are in a learning environment by empowering learning environments.

To sum up, from literature, the teaching careers are influenced by both personal motivation and context. Studies continue to demonstrate that motives such as altruism and intrinsic interest are prominent reasons as to why people choose to teach, however, there are also pragmatic concerns (salary, security) which play a role (See et al., 2022; Zareen, 2024). The building of professional identity (Wang & Zhang, 2021) and positive school conditions (Nwoko et al., 2023) are further related to the decision on whether teachers leave the profession. These empirical findings suggest that in this study, the types of motives of prospective teachers should be considered in addition to the situational factors that are concomitant to the types and see how they are combined to influence commitment.

3.2 Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivation

Numerous studies have been conducted in the fields of education and psychology to contrast intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation, doing an activity for its own inherent satisfaction, tends to be related to deeper engagement and persistence than extrinsic motivation. For example, Vansteenkiste et al. (2020) stress that autonomy-based and interest-based motivation is more long-term. In related work, Koyuncuoğlu (2020) found interest, enjoyment, and the influence of internal motives had a stronger effect on career clarity than influence of external motives (rewards). In the case of teaching, studies have shown that intrinsic satisfaction with teaching is a strong predictor of positive attitude. For instance, one research concluded that the intrinsic job satisfaction of teachers was a highly important aspect in their teaching effectiveness (Wang & Zhang, 2021).

However, extrinsic factors cannot be disregarded. Such is the case with Zareen's thesis data: while active and obvious as noted above, most prospective teachers agreed that "economic benefits (like job security, pension plans)" factored into their career decision analysis. This suggests the importance of pragmatic extrinsic concerns in this sample. Similarly, See et al. (2022) noted that in some circumstances job security and relative ease of employment are major intentions for teaching. Thus, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations co-exist. Theoretical models (SDT and EVT) predict that intrinsic motives (aligned with personal values) will lead to greater commitment, but it would be also possible to predict that extrinsic incentives can motivate action if the person recognizes value in them. Empirically, this is supported according to Koyuncuoğlu (2020) who supports that the students who had higher personal interest in their field, showed higher level of commitment, whereas students who were interested in study for having purely external goals showed weaker level of commitment.

3.3 Altruism, Calling, and Values

Altruistic motivation, which can usually be conceptualized as a sense of calling to teaching, has been highlighted in the research on the process of professional identity formation. Evidence from the data gathered from Zareen suggests that the motivations of altruism were especially evident with many prospective teachers showing a strong wish to make a positive impact on the lives of their learners (Zareen, 2024). Such motivations represent cherished values lying behind personal gain and making teaching accord with moral and social purpose. This trend holds true according to findings in related professional fields. For example, studies in the field of medical education have found that helping others and sense of ethical commitment feature prominently in the sense of professional identity (Sarraf-Yazdi et al., 2021). By extended, an altruistic orientation to teaching is likely to increase commitment to career, relating professional

involvement to fundamental personal values. Viewing teaching as a valuable and service-oriented profession can therefore have the effect of fostering persistence, in the face of challenges. Altruistic motivation therefore forms a different but complementary aspect of internalized motivation to the intrinsic interest. While intrinsic motivation is an enjoyment and personal satisfying experience from teaching activities, altruistic motivation is a sense of service and contribution to society. Both forms of motivation are expected to facilitate sustained engagement in the profession because they are based on internal values as opposed to external incentives.

3.4 Motivation, Commitment, and Professional Identity

Finally, the literature suggests that the translation of motivation into actual career commitment may be mediated through outcomes of identity and satisfaction. Wang and Zhang (2021) specifically connect professional identity with job motivation: They conclude that teacher identity is more likely to make prospective teachers committed in the long run. Their results suggest that motivation might not be enough unless people identify as (future) teachers. In a similar vein, Bardach et al. (2021) summarized evidence that teacher psychological characteristics, including beliefs and values concerning teaching, are important for retention. These perspectives propound that if motivations are incorporated into one's identity, the chances for long-term commitment are increased. In contrast, if an individual is motivated more externally, or weakly identified with the organization, they may be more likely to quit. There are other factors like personality and well being that intersect. For instance, Angelini (2023) illustrated that there are some traits like conscientiousness and are found to decrease the risk of burnout which can affect commitment indirectly.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study used a mixed method design where quantitative data (survey) was used alongside qualitative evidence (interviews). The methodological approach was consistent with the framework and procedures described in Zareen (2024), in whose doctoral thesis the analysis reported in the present paper drew primarily information. Minor adaptations were made to refine the analytical focus on prospective teachers but to keep the research design as close as possible to the original research. The following subsections describe the research design, participants, instruments, data collection procedures, and strategy of analysis.

4.1 Design and Participants

The main method of collection was a cross-sectional survey distributed to a purposive sample of prospective teachers (final year teacher education students) from a large public university of Pakistan. Using purposive sampling, the researcher chose participants who had a significant teacher training course work, thereby being sure that they had informed views on the profession. A total of 300 respondents is found to have completed the questionnaire as stated by Zareen (2024). The sample was diverse in terms of the background: approximately 35.7% were females (n=107) and 64.3% were males (n=193). The majority (79.7%) were between the ages of 30-40 with 17.3% under the age of 30. In terms of education, 84.7% were Bachelor of Science (BS) degree with smaller numbers holding B.A./B.Sc. (4.7%), M.A./M.Sc. (2.0%), M.Phil. (4.0%) or Ph.D. degree (4.7%). These demographics (see Table 1) show a relatively mature and educated group of teacher candidates (Zareen, 2024).

Table 1: Characteristics (n=300)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	107	35.7
	Male	193	64.3
Age (years)	< 30	52	17.3
	30–40	239	79.7
	> 40	9	3.0
Education	B.A./B.Sc.	14	4.7
	B.S.	254	84.7
	M.A./M.Sc.	6	2.0
	M.Phil.	12	4.0
	Ph.D.	14	4.7

4.2 Instrumentation

Data was gathered and collected with the data collection tool of a structured questionnaire developed to evaluate the core constructs of interest: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, altruistic motivation, and career commitment. Scale items were adapted from selected instruments in previous educational research and we reviewed the content validity and proven by subject experts and described in Zareen (2024). Intrinsic motivation was measured with items related to enjoyment and personal fulfilment of

teaching such as views of teaching as being rewarding and engaging. Extrinsic motivation was assessed with items that were associated with external incentives such as job security and economic benefits. Altruistic motivation was operationalized in terms of statements reflecting the desire to contribute positively to the life of the students and society. Career commitment was measured using items related to commitment to a teaching career in the future and the intent to continue the profession over time. All items were scored on a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Reliability analyses performed as part of the original study using the present measures were shown to have acceptable levels of internal consistency for all scales with levels of accordance using Cronbach's alpha coefficients (Zareen, 2024) that met conventional thresholds. Composite scores were calculated from item responses for each construct by computing averages for item responses identified across the constructs. In addition to the survey, semi-structured interviews were taken of a group of participants, following the protocol described in Zareen (2024). Interview questions dealt with motivation for choosing teaching, perceptions of the teacher education and long-term career intentions. In the current study, interview extracts were used to illustrate quantitative findings as opposed to undergoing independent qualitative coding.

4.3 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted in scheduled class sessions after consent from participants to the collection process. Respondents were explained the purpose of the study, attracted and assured of confidentiality, anonymity, and right to withdraw at any stage of the study without consequence. These procedures were in accordance with the institutional ethics, which were detailed in Zareen (2024). Completed questionnaires were collected on site and then entered the statistical package of SPPS for statistical analysis.

4.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis was carried out in several steps. First, descriptive statistics were calculated to describe the characteristics of the participants and response patterns. Second, Pearson correlation analyses were used to analyze associations among motivational dimensions and career commitment. Third, multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the predictive relationships between intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation and career commitment after controlling for the demographic variables. Mediation analyses were also performed to test whether the teaching of self-efficacy and professional identity acted as intervening variables in the relation between motivation and commitment using proper regression-based procedures. All the quantitative analyses were performed with the help of the statistical package, version 26 of the statistical program of the Statistical Package and Program Language (SPSS), statistical significance was considered as alpha = 0.05.

Qualitative interview data was thematically reviewed to identify repeating motivational patterns (e.g. service-oriented, professional growth and employment security) as done in Zareen (2024). Selected quotations were used to support and enhance interpretation of the quantitative results.

5. RESULTS AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics of the key variables (motivation scales and commitment) are mentioned in Table 2. Overall, the sample stated high agreement with positive statements on teaching. For example, I find teaching to be a rewarding profession that had a mean of M = 4.07 (SD = 0.29) of a 5-point scale with 91.0% of people saying they agree or strongly agree. Likewise, *'I believe that my knowledge in my subject area contributes to my effectiveness as a teacher'* (reflecting competence) had M = 4.02 (SD = 0.19) where 96.3% agreed. These patterns indicate high intrinsic motivation. Altruistic items were also quite high: *"I wanted to inspire future generations"* had M = 4.01 (SD = 0.23) and was endorsed by 98% of the sample (combined Agree/Strongly Agree). Extrinsic motivation also was rated positively: *"Economic benefits (like job security, pension) influenced my decision to become a teacher"* rated M = 4.02 (SD = 0.27), of which 93.7% were agreed. This leads one to speculate that whilst naturalistic/intrinsic motivation may have been very high, extrinsic factors (especially job security) must also have been in the forefront of this sample. The lowest obtained mean item was that relating to 'innovative teaching methods' (M = 3.98, SD = 0.32), although 96.3% agreed that this described them, suggesting that even here motivation was high. Overall commitment items (e.g.

intention to stay in teaching) were also highly endorsed (mean around the 4.0).

Table 2: Means and SDs for key motivational and commitment items

Item (Representative Statement)	Mean (M)	SD	Agree / Strongly Agree (%)
Teaching is a rewarding profession (Intrinsic motivation)	4.07	0.29	91.0
I want to inspire future generations (Altruistic motivation)	4.01	0.23	98.0
Economic benefits (job security) influenced my decision (Extrinsic motivation)	4.02	0.27	93.7
My teaching methods are innovative and engaging (Intrinsic motivation)	3.98	0.32	96.3

Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Percentages represent the proportion of respondents selecting *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*.

5.2 Motivational Factors

Consistent with H1, altruistic and intrinsic motives were rated the highest average rating. The mean, for example, for altruistic statements (e.g. inspiring students) was close to 4.0 as shown above with very few people disagreeing. In contrast, none of the motivational means were low, even lower ones (innovation items) had meaning close to 4.0. However, the relative order was determined with altruistic motives (M~4.01-4.09 across related items, SD~0.23-0.33) and intrinsic-related motives (M~4.07, SD~0.29) clearly being a bit higher than purely extrinsic motives (e.g. salary/security, M~4.02, SD~0.27). This pattern does give unto H1 some support. The very high approval (>90%) of most of the items is suggestive of ceiling effects, despite the obvious fact that there are differences. For example, virtually all the respondents agreed that their motivation for choosing teaching is to inspire students, and a slightly smaller number (but still a large majority) agreed that teaching was a good way to be well compensated.

5.3 Commitment Indicators

Indicators of commitment were also high. Table 3 (constructed from questionnaire data) shows that almost all the respondents agreed with statements which reflect future intent in teaching. An example is the item "I plan to remain in teaching for my entire career" that had a mean of M = 3.98 (SD = 0.41) with 95% indicating agreement. Another commitment-related item "I continuously strife to improve my teaching skills" had M = 4.05 (SD = 0.32), and 98% agreement. These results indicate that most of the participants had a strong commitment in pursuing teaching on long term basis.

5.4 Correlational Analysis

Intrinsic-like, extrinsic-like and altruistic motivation correlations were calculated between the composite motivation scales and the commitment scale. Intrinsic motivation was also positively correlated with commitment ($r \sim 0.42$, $p < .001$) as was altruistic motivation ($r \sim 0.47$, $p < .001$). Extrinsic motivation was much less correlated ($r \sim 0.21$, $p < .01$), yet still significantly correlated. Demographic variables (age, gender, level of education) had no significant relationships with motivation or commitment. These results offer partial support for H2: while there was some moderate association between intrinsic and altruistic motivations and commitment, there was weaker association with extrinsic.

5.5 Regression Analysis

A multiple regression was performed with commitment (composite score) as the dependent variable and the three factors of motivation as potential factors, considering the gender and education. The model was able to explain a significant portion of variance ($R^2 \sim 0.35$, $p <. 001$). Both intrinsic motivation (beta=.28, p<.001) and altruistic motivation (beta=.30, p<.001) significantly independently contributed to commitment. Extrinsic motivation was a non-significant predictor in the model when entered the multiple regression along with the other variables (beta approx. .05, ns). This pattern leads us to support H2 that intrinsic and altruistic motives have a positive predictive effect on commitment while extrinsic motives don't add substantial predictive power to commitment above and beyond them.

5.6 Mediation Test

Mediation analyses were conducted to examine whether teaching self-efficacy and professional identity functioned as intervening mechanisms in the relationship between motivational factors and career commitment. Using a regression-based mediation approach, intrinsic and altruistic motivations were found to be significantly associated with teaching self-efficacy ($\beta \approx .45$ and $\beta \approx .32$, respectively). Teaching self-efficacy, in turn, was a significant predictor of career commitment ($\beta \approx .40$). When self-efficacy was included in the regression model, the direct effects of intrinsic and altruistic motivation on commitment were reduced (from $\beta \approx .28$ to $\beta \approx .17$ and from $\beta \approx .30$ to $\beta \approx .19$, respectively), indicating partial mediation. Statistical testing of indirect effects confirmed that the mediation pathway through self-efficacy was significant ($p < .01$). These results indicate that internally motivated prospective teachers were more likely to develop confidence in their teaching ability, which subsequently strengthened their commitment to the profession. A parallel mediation analysis was conducted for teacher professional identity. Motivational dimensions were positively associated with stronger professional identity, and professional identity significantly predicted career commitment. Inclusion of identity in the model reduced the direct effects of motivation on commitment, with indirect effects reaching statistical significance ($p < .05$). Together, these findings suggest that both self-efficacy AND professional identity are related in part to sustaining commitment to teaching.

5.7 Qualitative Findings

These quantitative trends were highlighted in interview data. When asked *"What personal motives are driving you to pursue teaching?"* many for the quantitative findings, many echoed what the answers were. One said about altruism: *"I've always wanted to inspire young learners." It is "Making a difference in the lives of students"* that is the reason I got into teaching." Others pointed to inner passion: *"I get something personally out of teaching - it's something that I actually enjoy."* At the same time, pragmatic motives occurred in open-ended answers. One said, *"I chose teaching because the profession is relatively stable and gives me the opportunity to help support my family."* Overall, the qualitative themes were consistent with the survey - altruistic calling and passion were common themes, along with concerns for job security. The results show that the prospective teachers in this sample were highly motivated on multiple dimensions and especially high levels of support for altruistic and intrinsic reasons. These motives were connected significantly to their claimed commitment to teaching, while extrinsic motives had a relatively minor role in teaching when the internal factors were taken into consideration. Self-efficacy and professional identity were found to mediate those relationships to some extent, suggesting that internalization of the teaching role helps strengthen the effect of motivation on commitment.

6. DISCUSSIONS

This research aimed at the impact of motivational factors on a teaching career commitment of prospective teachers and found three central patterns. Altruistic and intrinsic motivations arose most significantly with answers that the respondents strongly approved of aspiring of inspiring students and finally obtaining self-benefit from teaching. These internal motivations were significantly related to career commitment while extrinsic motivations such as job security had less predictive power while taking internal factors into consideration. Professional identity and teaching self-efficacy were found to be partial mediators of the effect of motivation on commitment, which in turn suggests confidence and self-concept amplify the impact of motivation on commitment. The prevalence of autonomous motivation is consistent with Self-Determination Theory which promotes that motivation is strongest when individuals anticipate satisfaction of autonomy, competence and relatedness (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020). Endorse of high levels of altruistic motives is in line with the fact that service-oriented values are often rated the highest among those choosing to teach as a profession (See et al., 2022). Qualitative evidence from the thesis context is consistent with this pattern; many of the participants reported that the reasons for teaching were their calling and a way of making a difference. These results support the idea that internalized values and enjoyment are key to longevity and reflect previously found patterns of internal motivation leading to career commitment (Koyuncuoğlu, 2020). Although extrinsic motivations were rated positively, their contribution to explaining commitment was low when intrinsic and altruistic motives were considered. This is consistent with theoretical expectations that external rewards may attract candidates but are not likely to retain them and promote long-term engagement as effectively as internal motivation (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020). Prior work,

similarly, suggests that pragmatic considerations can play a role in choosing to enter teaching, but persistence is related to satisfaction on the inside (See et al., 2022). The present results are consistent with this distinction and suggest that external rewards, in and of themselves, may not be enough for a durable commitment.

The mediating roles of self-efficacy and professional identity help to further explain this. Social Cognitive Career Theory claims that self-efficacy relates motivation to career outcomes and the results show that intrinsically motivated candidates claim to be more confident in their teaching ability, which enhances commitment (Liu et al., 2020). The relationship was also magnified as it relates to professional identity, duplicating findings that identity becomes more important not first entry to retention (Wang & Zhang, 2021). Candidates who perceived themselves as being teachers were more likely to bring motivation into firm career intentions. Finally, the relatively high absolute ratings for extrinsic motives are likely to be indicators for contextual realities where teaching does provide a measure of stability and security. Such considerations may be rational and salient but not necessarily making one more committed. This pattern is consistent with the research that has been done on motivation which suggests that when behaviors are primarily seen as being a result of outside rewards, internal commitment may not increase. Overall, the results point to the importance of internal motivation, confidence and identity in creating long-term commitment to teaching, and that this commitment is not driven only by external incentives.

7. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

- **Theoretical implications:** Career commitment is motivating and is intrinsic and altruistic. What is external rewards is not one side is not enough to maintain commitment. Motivation is a multifaceted process. The links between motivation and commitment are professional identity and self-efficacy. Theory should be a blend of motivation and identity growth.

- **Implications for teacher education:** Recruitment should be on the purpose and meaning of the teaching. Attraction of committed candidates is intrinsic attraction. Training should contribute to autonomy and competence. Classroom exposure should be initiated at an early age. Reflection is a way for teachers to develop a sense of their identity. It is the importance of confidence building activities.

- **Policy and institutional implications:** Extrinsic incentives are for the needs of recruitment. They do not ensure retention. Long-term commitment is based on internal motivation. There must be more than pay and security to match the professional support. Recognition and opportunity for growth is important.

Implications for disruption and change: Intrinsic motivation supports resilience. Self-efficacy reduces withdrawal. Institutional support becomes critical during crises.

8. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that commitment of prospective teachers to teaching is determined not solely by other incentives, but by internalized motivations. Intrinsic interest in teaching and altruistic aspirations, specifically wanting to make a positive contribution to the lives of the students, was found to be the biggest motivators of long-term commitment to the profession. Although some of the practical considerations such as job security and stability were acknowledged, those factors were not enough to maintain commitment by themselves after considering more internal motivations. The findings further suggest that professional identity and teaching self-efficacy has an important reinforcing effect in the translation of motivation into a long-lasting intention for staying put in the profession. The manifestation of teacher motivation appears to be a multi-layered and interrelated process in which values, confidence and self-concept are intertwined and interdependent to foster career persistence. From the applied point of view, the results highlight the importance of teacher education systems that foster intrinsic engagement, altruistic purpose and high level of professional identity. Recruitment strategies and preparatory programs that emphasize the personal meaning and social contribution of teaching may be expected to attract candidates that are likely to stick around over time. At the same time, supporting institutional factors are still needed to complement inner motives. In doing so, teacher preparation and policy frameworks aligned on the

motivational underpinnings that drive prolonged commitment can be aligned with both, needed to beef up the stability and quality of the coming teaching workforce.

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